Washington Park Arboretum

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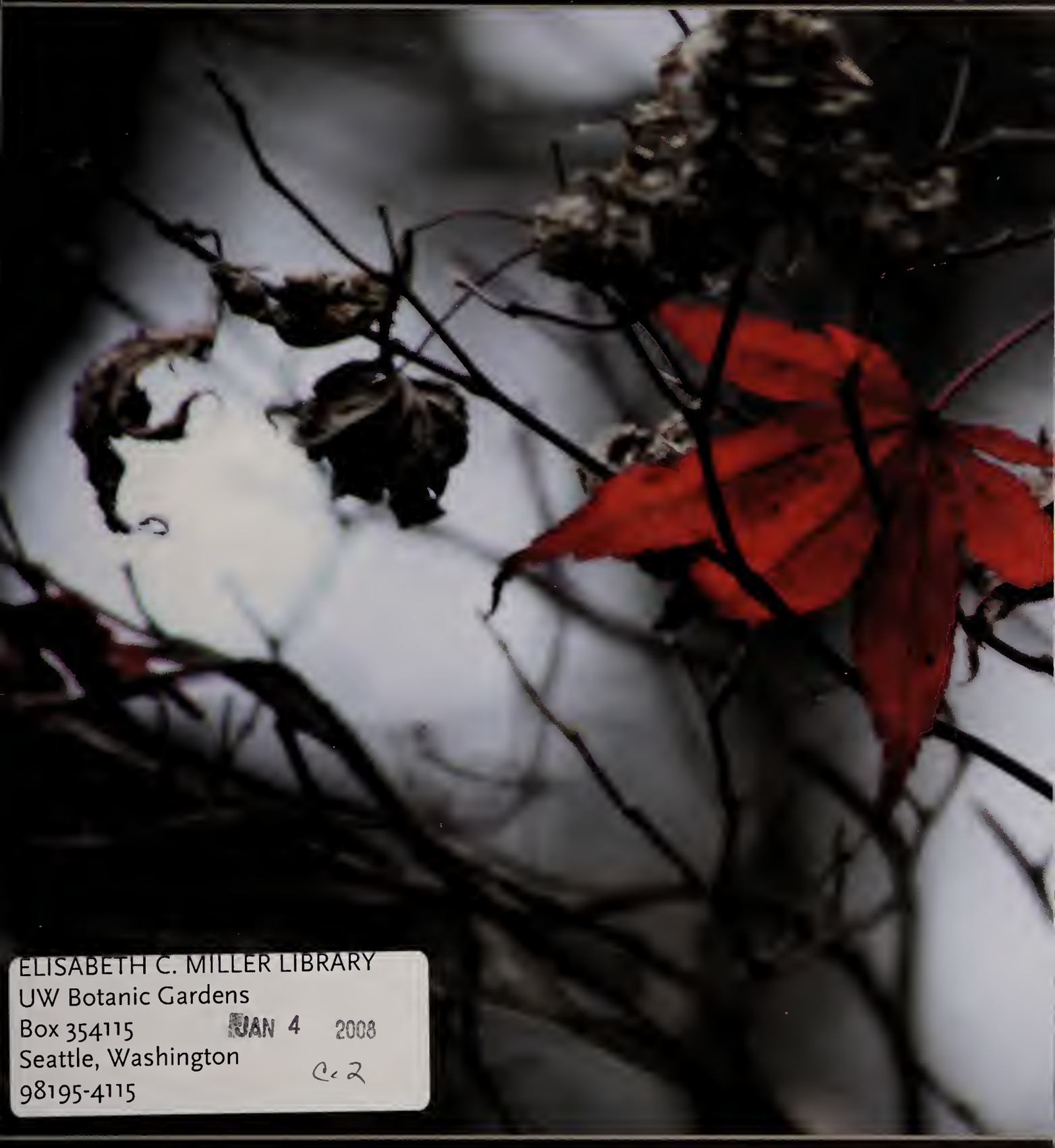

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Washington Park Arboretum

The Arboretum is a 230-acre dynamic garden of trees and shrubs, displaying internationally renowned collections of oaks, conifers, camellias, Japanese and other maples, hollies and a profusion of woody plants from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Aesthetic enjoyment gracefully co-exists with science in this spectacular urban green space on the shores of Lake Washington. Visitors come to learn, explore, relax or reflect in Seattle's largest public garden.

The Washington Park Arboretum is managed cooperatively by the University of Washington Botanic Gardens and Seattle Parks and Recreation; the Arboretum Foundation is its major support organization.

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2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112
206-325-4510 voice / 206-325-8893 fax
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www.arboretumfoundation.org
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Constance Bollen, Graphic Design
Joy Spurr, Photography (unless otherwise noted)

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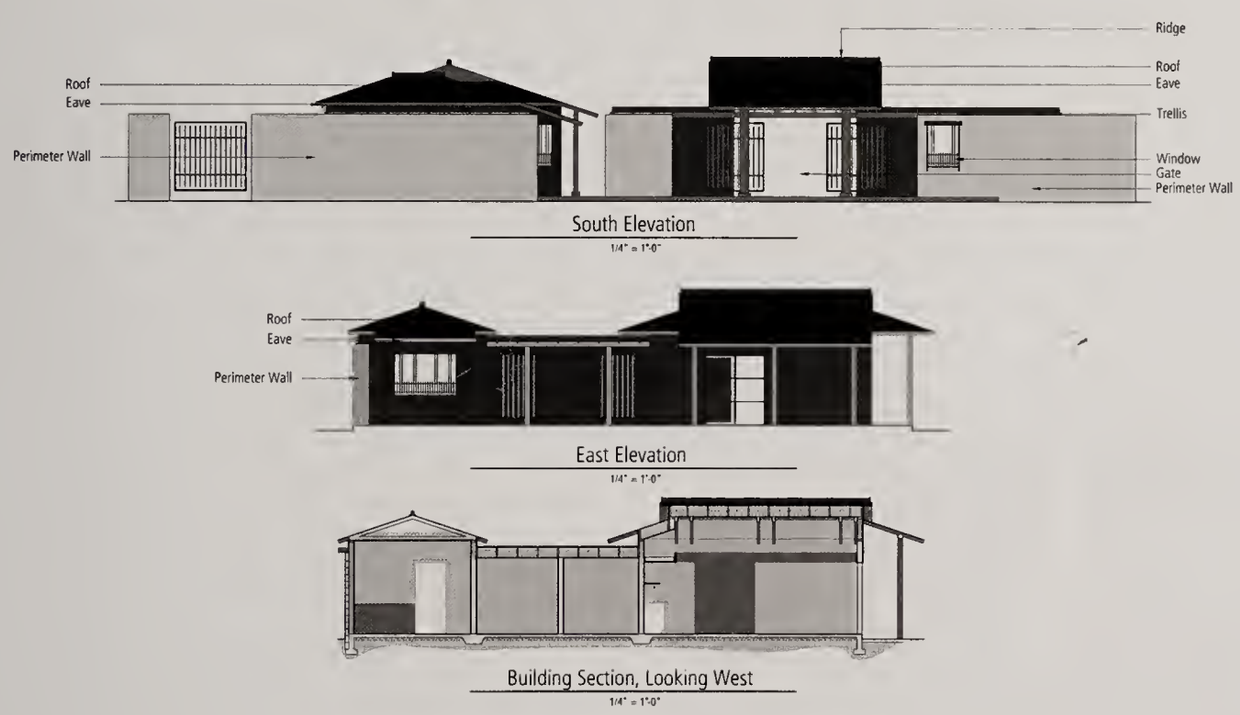


ABOVE: Architectural plans for the Washington Park Arboretum Japanese Garden's new gatehouse complex display its traditional exterior style; interiors will feature modern facilities and amenities. See our story on page three. Plans from Hoshide Williams, Architects.

ON THE COVER: The last leaves of fall cling to a Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) in the Arboretum's wetlands. Photograph by Jennifer Leigh, from "The Wild Within: Wetlands of the Washington Park Arboretum."

Winter: Not the Quiet Season This Year

For most gardeners winter is the quiet season: a time to plan, make lists and dream of next year. But not this year—not here at the Arboretum.

This year the place is humming with activity. The holly collection has been moved to a location along the Boulevard, clearing the way for the new Pacific Connections Garden. Hundreds of old friends and supporters, including Mayor Greg Nickels and University of Washington Provost Phyllis Wise, gathered on October 11 for the ceremonial Groundbreaking for Pacific Connections. We paraded along Arboretum Drive, behind a great, carved Western red cedar column for the new interpretive shelter, and watched as the column was raised at the edge of the new meadow.

Over the course of the winter, the site for the Cascadia focal forest will be graded, new paths and retaining walls installed, the meadow planted, and the new shelter constructed. Bob Lilly, longtime friend of the Arboretum, is on the case: contacting the region's network of growers to acquire for us the fabulous collection of plants that Dan Hinkley has designated for the five Pacific Rim entry gardens. Look for those new gardens to be planted in late winter or early spring.

BILL HORN

And, there is a burst of new activity at the Japanese Garden. The Garden's friends and its Advisory Council, together with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Foundation, are working to make its entry worthy of the great garden behind the gate and to provide some essential amenities for visitors and staff: a meeting room, maintenance shed, ticket booth, and finally, after 47 years, real public restrooms. The City has committed $450,000 to the project. All of the additional needed funds are being raised this winter.

The Wild Within: Wetlands of the Washington Park Arboretum, a gorgeous new book of photographs and essays, is now available for purchase at the Arboretum Gift Shop. Thanks to the Wetland Alliance, who published it, the proceeds of the book's sales will benefit the Foundation and our efforts on behalf of the Arboretum.

And, finally, we are working on a special treat for the upcoming Northwest Flower and Garden Show—a display garden that will celebrate our new Pacific Connections Garden and feature many of the same plants that will soon be on display here in the Arboretum. We are also excited that Dan Hinkley has agreed to make a special presentation about the plants for the Pacific Connections project at our Patron and Benefactor event. Stop by and see us at the Show and learn more about all that we are doing here at our great Arboretum. See you there.

Paige Miller

Paige Miller, Executive Director,
Arboretum Foundation

The October 11th groundbreaking ceremony for the Pacific Connections Garden was attended by (from left to right) University of Washington Provost Phyllis Wise, University of Washington Botanic Gardens Director David Mabberley, University of Washington---College of Forest Resources Dean Bruce Bare, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Board President John Johnston and Arboretum Foundation Capital Campaign Chairman Allan Ferrin.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE IMPORTANT:

The New Japanese Garden Gatehouse

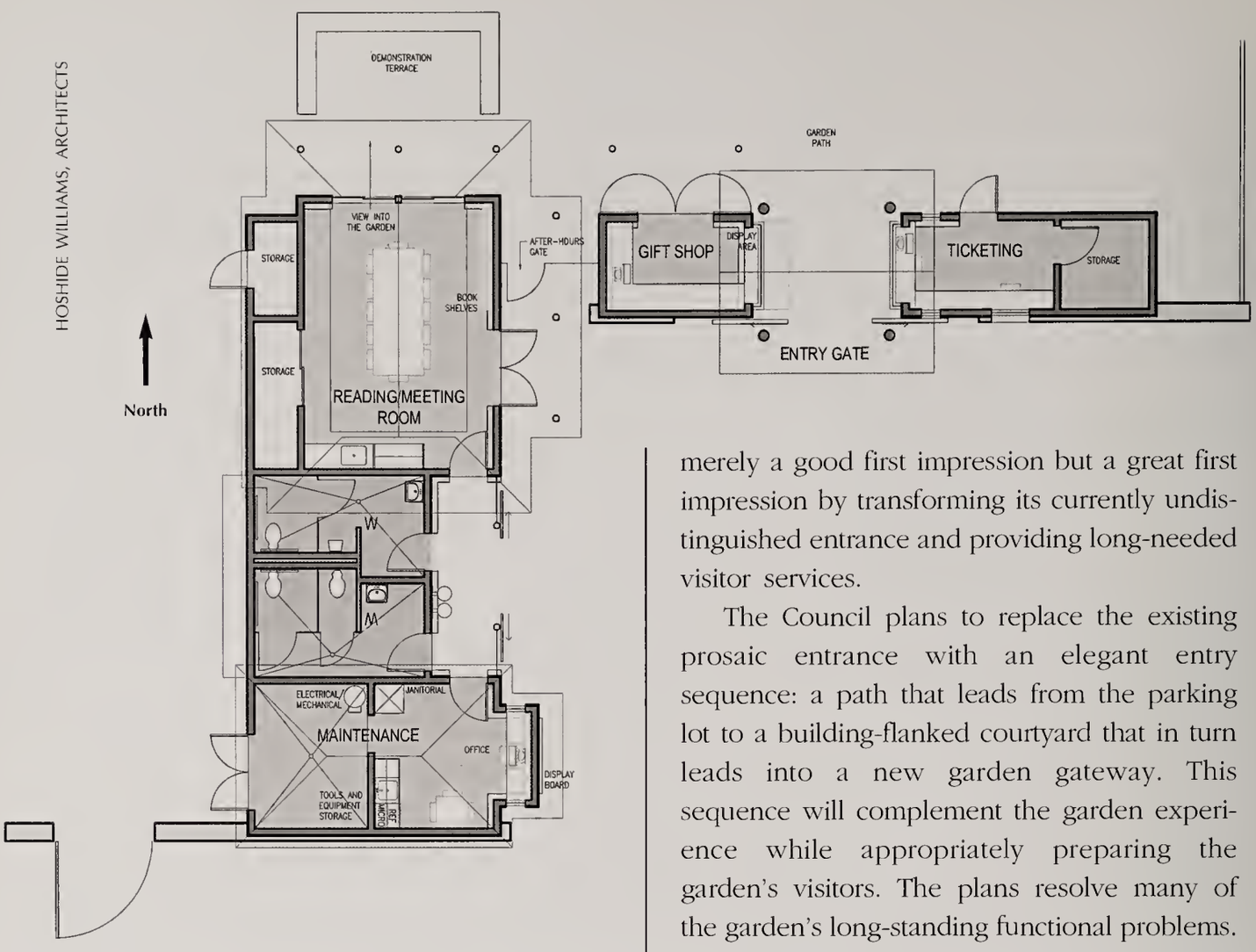
By Iain Robertson

I am sure there isn't a reader of these lines whose parents did not impress upon him or her the importance of first impressions. That said, consider the entrance to the Japanese Garden, which does not give visitors the best initial impression of the wonderful space that lies beyond it.

Not only are first impressions important, but one doesn't often get a second chance to

NAKANO ASSOCIATES, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

BELOW RIGHT: The new gatehouse provides an elegant entry to the Japanese Garden while blending discreetly into the Arboretum's landscape.



make a good first impression. Nevertheless, that's exactly what a campaign recently initiated by the Japanese Garden Advisory Council plans to do—to give Seattle's magnificent Japanese Garden another chance to make not merely a good first impression but a great first impression by transforming its currently undistinguished entrance and providing long-needed visitor services.

The Council plans to replace the existing prosaic entrance with an elegant entry sequence: a path that leads from the parking lot to a building-flanked courtyard that in turn leads into a new garden gateway. This sequence will complement the garden experience while appropriately preparing the garden's visitors. The plans resolve many of the garden's long-standing functional problems. They provide for a meeting room and gift shop, the installation of desperately needed rest rooms, an upgrade of inadequate maintenance facilities, and the construction of a suitable ticket booth in the new gateway. And they present an opportunity to start again—to create a wonderful, and deeper, second imprint of a first impression.

Entering a Japanese garden isn't a casual, *en passant* "How're ya doin'?" sort of thing. It is a carefully conceived introduction, a formal greeting, a setting of the stage. In other words, entering a garden is an important ritual to be observed and celebrated. The experience reminds us that the process of entering a garden involves ritual behavior and mental preparation, and that such an experience requires appropriate spatial forms. Imagine what a spatial welcome mat, a spatial greeting, or a spatial business card might look or feel like. What do we wish the introduction to our Japanese Garden to say, and how do we wish it to unfold?

FUNDING THE JAPANESE GARDEN GATEHOUSE

Join the Japanese Garden Advisory Council in creating a gatehouse that provides visitors with a fitting first impression of the Japanese Garden. Advisory Council members have pledged their support and now we are reaching out to the wider community. Join us to create a beautiful and functional gatehouse for one of Washington Park Arboretum's crown jewels.

Checks maybe made out to the Arboretum Foundation, noted for the Japanese Garden Gatehouse Project, and sent to the following address:

Arboretum Foundation
2300 Arboretum Drive East
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The experiential poverty of the current physical introduction is moderated by some lovely plants of Japanese origin, the beautifully understated gate with its granite stone threshold framing glimpses of the garden beyond, and the warm welcome provided by Mary Nagan at the ticket booth. Nevertheless, the entrance is a sorry introduction to one of Seattle's most rewarding cultural institu tions—a silk purse entered through a sow's ear. With the garden's 50th anniversary rapidly approaching, it is time to remedy this situation. The plans described below not only transform the entrance but also provide much-needed visitor and staff facilities that will make a future visit to Seattle's Japanese Garden a delightful and comfortable experience.

Developed by Hoshide Williams, Architects and Nakano Associates, Landscape Architects, this elegant and efficient design will transform the garden's entrance. Variously described as an "entry gatehouse" or a "gatehouse village," the buildings consist of three separate structures enclosing two sides of a rectangular courtyard that is punctuated by a main gateway and a smaller, after-hours exit. A fundamental design goal was to minimize the buildings' obtrusive presence in the Arboretum in general and the garden in particular, while efficiently accommodating needed functions. This is achieved by breaking the building mass into smaller units and enveloping them beneath varied, overlapping roof forms. It is also achieved by locating the buildings where they will play a secondary role to the garden. Specifically, the bulk of the building is tucked into the toe of the valley located on the west side of the garden; only the smaller buildings, dominated by the new entrance, intrude gently across the valley floor to channel visitors physically and perceptually into the garden. The building mass firmly frames the entrance but

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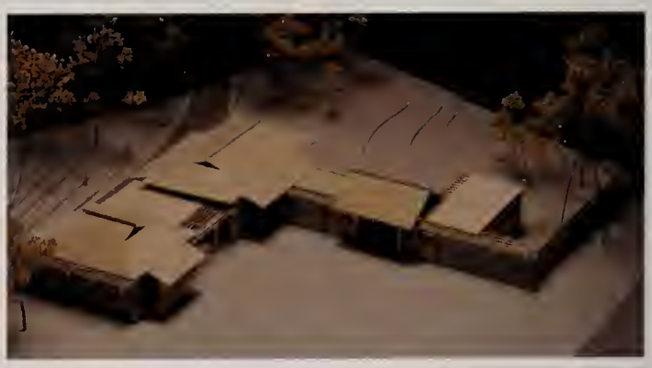
Plant hunter DAN HINKLEY will make a special presentation to guests at the Patron and Benefactor levels.

HOSHIDE WILLIAMS, ARCHITECTS



The roof lines and architectural details of the new gatehouse complex echo those found in a traditional Japanese village.

discreetly and decorously complements the flow into the garden.

Although not the largest part of the building complex, the gate is appropriately emphasized by its slightly exaggerated size and by a pitched roof that overtops the flat roofs of the flanking gift shop and ticket booth. To add further emphasis, its roof is supported by four large columns. The building mass is thus perceptually minimized in three ways: by careful siting, by breaking it into smaller parts, and by using human-scaled details on walls, openings and rooflines. Building forms and details also have been designed to impart an appropriate Japanese flavor to the design. Thus the intricate rooflines, windows and door openings are reminiscent of those found on traditional Japanese house and shed structures. The designers, however, have avoided the enticing but inappropriate trap of slavish imitation of traditional Japanese forms, materials and construction techniques, none of which fits contemporary American needs. Instead,

they have made masterful use of the design essence of Japanese structures to house contemporary needs.

While the rest rooms, gift shop, ticket booth and maintenance facilities accommodate essential services, it is the meeting room and the courtyards that will capture visitors' attention. The 14-by-21-foot meeting room is designed to accommodate diverse functions: group meetings, support space for garden programs, gathering space for tour groups, space for garden workshops, and a contemplation/reading space. Entered from the main courtyard, this well-proportioned room opens to the north where it extends into an intimate garden courtyard. Like other public parts of the gatehouse complex, the meeting room will be finished using materials with a Japanese flavor. It will be a delightful space and I—perhaps inappropriately—imagine myself sitting in meetings, gazing happily into the garden, unmindful of proceedings and discussions.

The generously sized entry courtyard is contained to the east by a seat wall that discretely separates it from Lake Washington Boulevard, while still providing welcoming views into the courtyard. Poles inserted into the wall will support flags and banners that celebrate and advertise garden events and cultural festivals—bringing the garden to life and giving it visibility to passing foot and vehicle traffic. If funds permit, the courtyard will be paved with stone rather than concrete, a Gerry Tsutakawa gate will be substituted for the current plan's utilitarian tubular steel gate, and a stone base will be added to the stucco walls—all of which will enhance and enrich the entry experience. Further, if we exceed our fundraising goal, interior detailing and materials may be upgraded. But I get ahead of myself. . .

How did all these plans come about? Glad you asked. Although Washington Park Arboretum's master plan ranks the development of Japanese Garden facilities as one of the Arboretum's highest-priority items, this, in itself, does not assure their completion. Efforts to build the gatehouse facilities were catalyzed by a generous anonymous commitment of $500,000 from garden supporters, without which the project would not have started. This commitment gave impetus to the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide $450,000 from ProParks Levy funds for design and construction. With this solid base of support from private garden friends and the City, the Japanese Garden Advisory Council has undertaken a fundraising campaign to raise the remaining $300,000 to complete the $1,250,000 project.

For the last 47 years, Seattle's Japanese Garden has been lovingly and thoughtfully tended by skilled City gardeners, assisted by a myriad of volunteers. Under their care, the garden matures into greater loveliness and significance each year. For many years, Unit 86 of the Arboretum Foundation, the Urasenke Foundation, and the Japanese Garden Advisory Council have led tours, conducted tea ceremonies and offered cultural events in the garden. As a result of these activities, the garden has become a natural and cultural treasure like no other in Seattle. The Japanese Garden is a piece of nature and a piece of art that deserves an appropriate frame—and these plans will provide it. The planned facilities will add to the garden's enchantment for all visitors, will allow the garden to be used by more visitors over a longer season, and will support a greater array of events. When implemented, they will create a stunning new first impression for Seattle's Japanese Garden. ~

Iain Robertson is an associate professor of Landscape Architecture and adjunct professor in the College of Forest Resources, University of Washington Botanic Gardens. He also serves on the Japanese Garden Advisory Council. He may be reached at iainmr@u.washinton.org.

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

By Marty Wingate

Tucked in the Inverleith neighborhood, just north of the center of Edinburgh, is a teaching garden that has been in use for more than 300 years. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is the very essence of what a botanic garden should be: at once educational and entertaining, it is a place to learn about good hedge plants, have a cup of tea, discover unusual rhododendrons or get lost in a Scottish heath—or at least a reasonable facsimile of one.

On a recent trip to Scotland, I planned to tour this 70-acre garden in just a half-day. Once I realized that no amount of dashing about would help, I decided that the best possible plan was to take a stroll. Here are the personal highlights of my tour:

Entering by the west gate of the garden, I first visited an enormous herbaceous border and a series of demonstration gardens. These areas form a major part of what could be called the home-garden teaching section, because visitors can find ideas that may work in their own gardens. While walking the almost 500-foot long herbaceous border, I eavesdropped on comments from visitors that ranged from assessments of the flowering qualities of a particular plant to evaluations of good (or poor) color combinations.

A natural staking system made from woven birch branches snakes through the border. It assists floppy perennials to stand tall, and the natural materials look much better than plastic-coated wire does. Even though they are staked, the perennials have a natural form, which means that the supports must have been installed just before they were needed—an example of skilled timing on the part of the gardeners. The birch branches are woven when they are still green, supple and easy to work. The deep brown color of the aged stakes suits the garden, and the supports create a more casual appearance than do other staking systems; they are like corrals for the plants.

A 30-foot-tall, 100-year-old beech hedge (the typical green form of *Fagus sylvatica* mixed with trees from the Atropurpurea group) stands behind the border. It is an ideal backdrop and an impressive sight, either from one of the nearby cutout walkways, where the tree trunks are easily viewable, or from a distance.

Behind the hedge lie the demonstration gardens; their themes include poisonous plants, food gardening and hedge plants. Practical education broadens into a collector's dream further along in the alpine garden. A

ABOVE RIGHT: The rock garden at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is built of Perthshire conglomerate and red sandstone from Dumfries and features 5000 species of plants from diverse habitats around the world, including alpines, wildflowers and dwarf specimens from woodlands and pastures.
BELOW LEFT: A clipped beech hedge (composed mainly of *Fagus sylvatica*) frames distant views.
BELOW RIGHT: Woven birch branches support perennials in a major herbaceous border.

MARTY WINGATE

MARTY WINGATE

sunny aspect, an abundance of rock to radiate heat and an enviable gathering of stone sinks create the right conditions to support cushiony species of *Dianthus* and *Saxifraga*, as well as the Pacific Northwest native *Lewisia*.

A number of glasshouses occupy a large corner of the garden. The research glasshouses are not open to the public, but the largest house is, and it provides a close look at the lives of plants from around the world. This glasshouse was built in the late 1960s. It draws admiring looks because of its design, which features a supporting metal framework on the outside of the building that "has been hailed as the most innovative since Paxton's Great Conservatory at Chatsworth," according to the Garden's literature. In an interesting turn of events, the conservatory at Chatsworth, demolished after World War I, was replaced with a glasshouse modeled after Edinburgh's.

Edinburgh is well known for its collection of *Vireya* rhododendrons, which are native to the frost-free mountains in Southeast Asia. They are grown under glass at Edinburgh and offer a look at the more exotic species of the genus of a plant with which we in the Pacific Northwest are so familiar. The stylish Victorian Tropical and Temperate Palm houses, built in 1834 and 1858 respectively, are attractive inside, given their wide-ranging plant collections, and outside, because of their elegant architecture.

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), locally known as "The Botanics," maintains plant collections, develops teaching programs and carries out scientific work. But the Edinburgh site is not the only garden the RBGE maintains. Benmore, in Argyll (west of Glasgow) was established as an RBGE garden in 1929 and was first planted with collections of rhododendrons and other species native to Bhutan, brought back by plant-hunter George Forrest. Logan, in the southwest of Scotland on a peninsula called the Rhins of Galloway, was first planted in 1869 but did not become a property of RBGE until 100 years later. It features a grove of eucalypts, a *Gunnera* bog and a *Cordyline* collection.

The Dawyck garden—where *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck', a narrow-growing cultivar of the European beech, was selected—has a long history in horticulture. Dating to the 17th century, it has been associated with the RBGE only since 1978. Dawyck is in the Borders, which is the area south of Edinburgh, near the English border. Collectively, the four sites comprise the National Botanic Gardens of Scotland.

Edinburgh's is the oldest garden, but it has not always been at its present site. In 1670, when the garden was established, it was just outside Holyrood Palace, about 2.5 miles away from where it is today. Called the "Physic Garden," it was a collection of medicinal plants arranged in a 40-foot square and was the second-oldest botanic garden in Britain, after the one established in Oxford in 1620. In 1820, the garden was moved to Inverleith.

The Southern Hemisphere garden in Edinburgh displays many plants familiar to Pacific Northwest gardeners, including *Embothrium coccineum* and hardy fuchsias. The same plants appear in English and Irish gardens, too, as the climate of the British Isles in general suits them. They grow well there, but we Northwesterners cannot help feeling a little sorry for the gardeners who plant them. This is because gardens in the British Isles lack one of the qualities that make these plants so attractive to us: visits by hummingbirds. The hummingbirds are ours, birds of the Americas—so all those shockingly scarlet flowers on the Chilean fire trees in Edinburgh open without a hummer in sight.

I continued on my tour, hurrying past specimens of unusual species of trees and trees of unusual size (an *Acer griseum* more than 30 feet tall comes close to the Washington Park Arboretum specimen of 44 feet) and arrived in the Heath Garden. This garden, which was redesigned in the late

1990s, features a natural display of plants native to Scotland and includes an abandoned croft.

Near the Heath Garden is the rock garden; its small trails wind up, around and over the setting, which simulates a natural landscape. And not far away are the Peat Walls. These low, raised beds are edged with peat blocks (replaced about every 15 years) and are planted with a variety of species with cultural needs to match the acid environment, including dwarf rhododendrons, trilliums, *Meconopsis* and gentians. At Edinburgh, the peat walls were first built in 1939. This must have been a trend, for peat walls appear in other gardens, including Branklyn Garden, a National Trust for Scotland property.

Sad to say, the self-guided tour of RBGE ended too quickly. But even a brief glimpse into other's gardens—public or otherwise—means we bring home more than a stack of brochures, plant lists, catalogs, and coasters from pubs. Travel broadens the mind and increases our awareness of the plants we grow and their places in the natural world.

As with other world-class gardens, plans to improve the Edinburgh site never end. The west gate through which I entered is now closed, and a visitors' center called The Gateway is under construction. Once completed, it will invite visitors to meet the garden in new ways, such as exploring the world of plants through collections that have been locked away from the public in the past; these collections will emphasize biodiversity in Scotland. ~

Marty Wingate is a garden columnist for The Seattle Post-Intelligencer and writes for many garden publications; her latest book is "The Bellevue Botanical Garden: Celebrating the First 15 Years." She serves on the Bulletin's editorial board and on the Library Committee of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens.

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ABOVE: The fruits of the non-native strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) set in winter and take a full year to ripen. Because their high sugar content causes them to ferment while still on the tree, feeding birds sometimes become intoxicated.

MIDDLE: In fall, the ripened seeds of native vine maples (*Acer circinatum*) attract songbirds.

BELOW: An American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) shelters among *Pyracantha* fruits.

OPPOSITE: Cedar waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) visit the Puget Sound area during spring and summer to feed on the region's abundant supplies of their main food source, berries.

Plan a Bird Haven for Next Summer

Why make your garden bird-friendly?

Think of it as a landscape painting, with trees, shrubs, grass and perhaps some picturesque rocks and a view of water. The scene is lovely, but something seems to be lacking. Add a human or two or a sailboat, and it becomes a little more interesting. Now add some birds. Suddenly, there is action, and the view is much more appealing. Birds, particularly when they sing and have colorful feathers, add life and pleasure to a garden scene.

Some varieties of birds will inhabit almost any kind of landscape—even a garden that looks like a vacant lot, with sparse shrubs and a monoculture lawn of nonnative grasses. But they may be among the species—including crows, starlings, pigeons and house sparrows—that few gardeners willingly would host. Noisy, aggressive and prone to run off our native songbirds, these interlopers thrive on the minimum amounts of food and cover offered by a typical garden.

But if you make your garden a haven for birds, you can attract the native species—warblers, sparrows and wrens—that delight our eyes and ears, while they ensure the continued presence of a diverse bird population in our urban environments. Not only do many of these desirable kinds of birds sing, but they also keep insects in check.

This essay will cover the minimal requirements and features necessary to make a garden friendly to our native birdlife. To

PHOTO—RAYMOND PARSONS, FROM "THE WILD WITHIN: WETLANDS OF THE WASHINGTON PARK ARBORETUM"

By Herb Curl, Jr.

paraphrase Sigmund Freud, "What does a bird want?" It wants the same things that almost all other animals do: Cover, food, water, shelter for procreation, and protection from predators.

Cover—First, let's dispose of the issue of whether to use native in preference to non-native plants. Although it is highly desirable to choose native plants, non-natives, especially evergreens, also can provide the essentials that birds require—places to hide, feed and nest. It is important to avoid planting invasive species, including European or evergreen holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), evergreen ivy (*Hedera helix*), butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*), mints (*Mentha*) and some kinds of clematis, such as traveler's joy (*Clematis vitalba*). And when you select bird-friendly trees and shrubs to plant, consider their eventual size at maturity. The strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), for instance, is a recommended addition, but a little slip will eventually grow to 20 feet in height.

Food—Birds find berries and fruits highly desirable: Just watch a flock of starlings strip a cherry tree of its fruits, or robins gorge on a cotoneaster's berries in winter. Other animals find them attractive too, so it is necessary to

provide birds access to these foods in ways that discourage squirrels, rats and other creatures from attempting to feed at the same source. Small shrubs that bear berries are good selections, for example, because they cannot support the weight of larger animals. Seed heads on perennials also are a natural food source, but select ones with stems sturdy enough to support the weight of feeding birds.

Another way to feed birds in the garden is to use bird seed feeders to supply thistle seeds and black sunflower seeds. Goldfinches love thistle seeds, while house finches can feed unmolested on black sunflower seeds, because their enemies, the house sparrows, are unable to crack the shells surrounding them. It is mandatory to remove perches and trays from seed feeders in order to discourage house sparrows, which otherwise will take over the feeders. Reduce the potential for disease by periodically cleaning feeders with a solution of one part bleach diluted with 10 parts water. Clean up feces and spilled seed from under the feeder in order to reduce disease and to discourage rats. But remember that birds can survive perfectly well without being fed by humans; we feed birds chiefly to attract them to places where we can conveniently view them.

Water—Water comes in two "flavors": still and running. Still water occurs in birdbaths and small ponds. When birds use a pond as a water source, they prefer being able to retreat to

PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIVES AS FOOD SOURCES FOR BIRDS

Planting a selection of the following trees and shrubs in your garden ensures a continuing supply of bird-attracting seeds, nuts, berries and other fruits.

TREES

Acer circinatum **(Vine maple). Small, multi-trunked deciduous tree with fall seeds; in spring some bird species use young leaves for building nests.**

Arbutus menziesii **(Madrone). Large, broad-leaved evergreen tree with long-lasting, orange-red fruits in fall persisting into winter.**

Cornus nuttallii **(Western dogwood). Large deciduous tree with red fruits in fall that especially attracts pileated woodpeckers.**

Corylus cornuta **(Beaked hazel). Small, spreading deciduous tree with fall nuts that are especially attractive to hairy woodpeckers, Steller's jays and red-breasted nuthatches.**

Tsuga mertensiana **(Western hemlock). Large, densely-needled evergreen growing up to 80 feet tall. Mature specimens produce seeds from ripened cones in fall.**

SHRUBS

Amelanchier alnifolia **(Juneberry). Deciduous shrub 6-10 feet high with blue-black berries in June and July.**

Cornus stolonifera **(Red-osier dogwood). Snowy-white summer berries ornament this six-foot high deciduous shrub; the berries carry enough fat, carbohydrate and protein to make them an especially valuable source of food for wildlife.**

Gaultheria shallon **(Salal). Spreading evergreen shrub growing between two and six feet high with ink-blue summer berries.**

Oemleria cerasiformis **(Indian plum). Deciduous shrub growing up to 15 feet high with black, olive-sized "plums" in summer and fall.**

Rosa nutkana **(Nootka rose). Deciduous sun-lover that grows up to 10 feet high; large purple hips linger into late fall and winter.**

Sambucus racemosa **(Red elderberry). Bright-red early summer berries decorate this tall deciduous shrub.**

Symphoricarpos albus **(Snowberry). A rangy deciduous shrub with white berries that ripen in August and remain through winter.**

Vaccinium parvifolium **(Red huckleberry). Growing between three and 12 feet high, this deciduous shrub sports bright red berries in summer.**

shrubbery nearby when they feel threatened; tree branches placed in shallow areas allow them places to perch. West Nile virus breeds in still water, which should be replaced once a week. (Standing water in containers that are not being used to attract birds, such as old tires and empty pots, should be discarded.) Ponds can be treated with "dunks" or donuts containing Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*), a bacterial larvicide that is harmless to birds, fish and amphibians. Sprays, drips and recirculating ponds and birdbaths attract birds, because they like the sound of running water.

Nesting—We are always thrilled when birds nest nearby. Each species has specific requirements for its nesting site. Robins and barn swallows prefer a shelf or some other type of flat surface, for example, while house finches seek shrubbery. If a gardener puts up a bird house to attract desirable species of native songbirds, some aggressive and undesirable species, such as starlings and house sparrows, may attempt to inhabit the bird house first. Usurpers must sometimes be evicted several times before they abandon it permanently.

Bird houses come in various sizes and shapes, and many bird species show strong preferences as to the size of the box, the size of the hole, and the height of the hole from the box floor. To choose the bird house best suited to attract the birds you want to nest in your garden, consult the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site listed in the resource section on page 33. Birds are territorial, so follow the basic rule of placing only one bird house for each species in your garden, unless you own a lot of acreage.

Predators are a part of nature, and our birds have two of them: Crows and cats. Since crows arrived in significant numbers in cities about fifty years ago, they have had a major impact on the nesting habits of native birds by raiding and destroying their nests. You can protect nests of native birds by ignoring them, since crows watch humans and will locate nests by following where we look. Cats are major predators of birds; even well-fed cats have the instinct to hunt and kill. Keeping your cats indoors is the ideal solution.

continues on page 33

RECOMMENDED READING

Bradley, Fern Marshall, editor. "Projects for the Birder's Garden." Dublin, NH: Yankee Books, 2004. **SB 454.3 .W5 B72 2004** ISBN 0-89909-393-0 $18.95. A practical guide with black and white line drawings, including detailed directions and supply lists for attracting, feeding and sheltering birds.

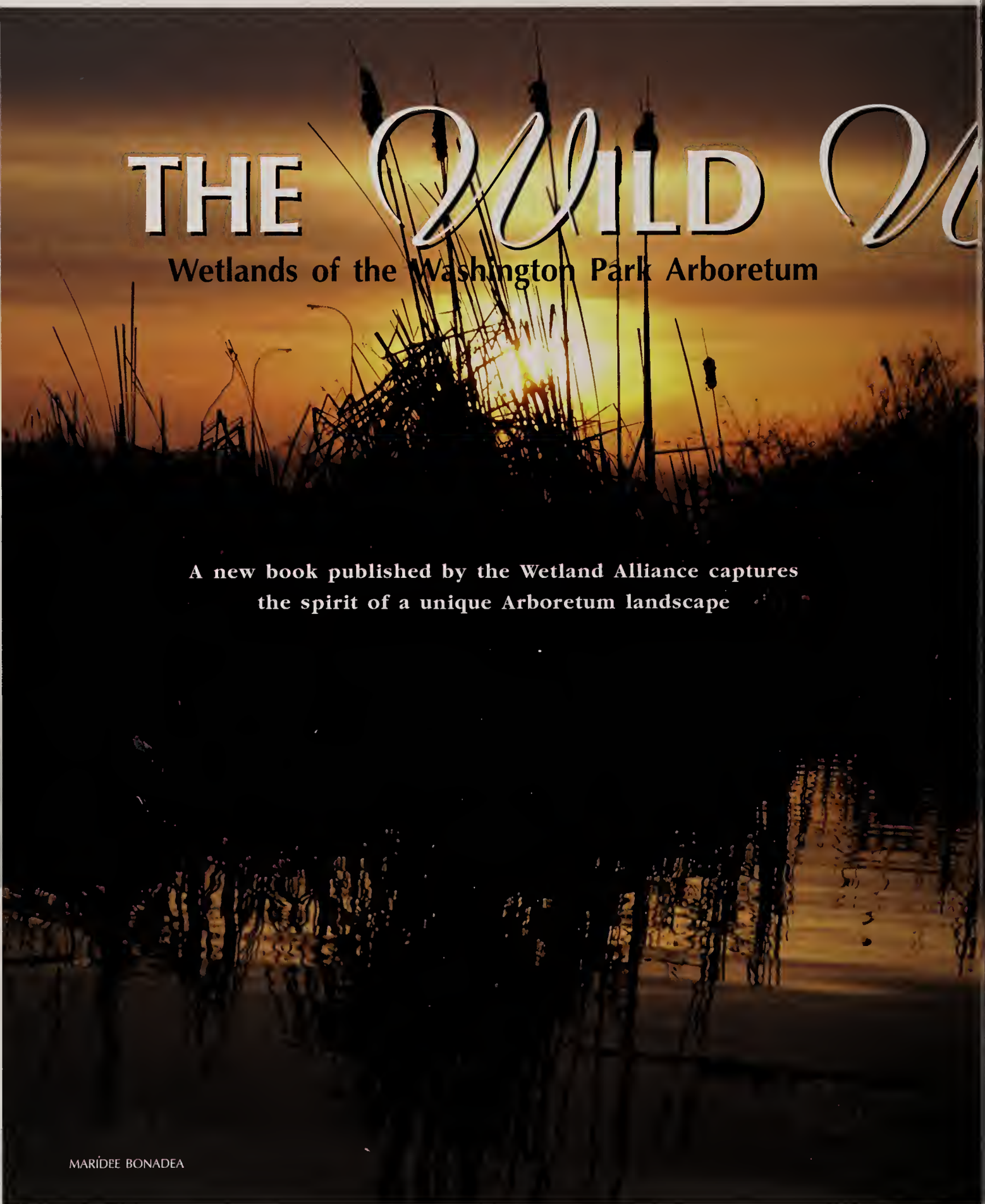
Link, Russell. "Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest." Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999. **PNW SB 454.3 .W5 L56 1999** ISBN 0-295-97820-1 $29.95. A comprehensive guide by a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wildlife biologist, with illustrations and instructions on creating wildlife habitat (including birds).

Roth, Sally. "Attracting Birds to Your Backyard." Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1998. **SB 454.3 .W5 R68 1998** Paperback edition: Rodale, 2002 ISBN 0-87596-861-9 $16.95. A comprehensive resource with color illustrations and detailed plans and directions for bird-attracting projects.

Roth, Sally. "Bird-By-Bird Gardening." Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 2006. **SB 454.3 .W5 R68 2006** ISBN 1-95486-620-1 $29.95. Organized by bird family and illustrated with color photos, this book gives recommendations for plants and landscaping within each bird family section.

Stokes, Donald W. "Stokes Bird Gardening Book: The Complete Guide To Creating A Bird-Friendly Habitat In Your Backyard." Boston: Little, Brown, 1998. **SB 454.3.W5 S86 1998** ISBN 0-316-81836-4 $13.99. Profusely illustrated, with chapters on different types of plants to attract birds, lawn alternatives, bird feeders and houses, and a special section on bird identification.

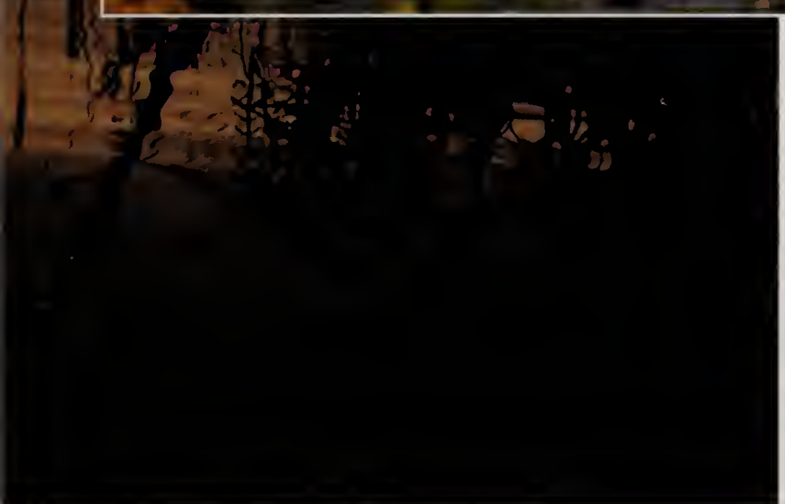
Selected by **Rebecca Alexander**, Plant Answer Line Librarian at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, University of Washington Botanic Gardens.

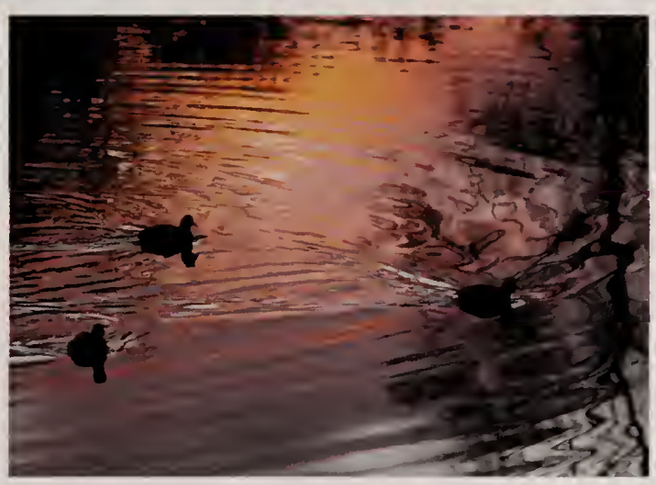


MIDDLE INSET: A great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) preys upon the wetland's fish and frogs.

MICHELE A. BURTON

KEVIN EBI





MICHELE A. BURTON

LOWER INSET: American coots (*Fulica americana*) paddle in wintry water.

MICHELE A. BURTON

Every day 100,000 cars pass through Seattle's Washington Park Arboretum wetlands. And while the speed, awareness and interest of the occupants vary, for the most part these wetlands pass by only on the edge of their consciousness. They may notice a heron, an eagle perched on a roadside snag or the long-standing beaver lodge on the north side of the thoroughway, but much of the wetlands' majesty, and most of its mystery, is lost to the demands of the journey.

The remarkable beauty and value of these wetlands can only be fully appreciated up close, at a slow, intimate pace. It is the purpose of these photographic images—created by a volunteer cadre of talented, perceptive and thoughtful citizens with a deep appreciation of the uniqueness within the Arboretum's shoreline boundaries—to capture the grace, wildness, natural artistry and surprises that exist within the wetlands.

The wetlands reveals itself in the patterns designed by nature. Early morning sun creates

MARGRET MARIA CORDTS

a pattern of tall shadows across a snowy field, ripples of light and water traverse the lake surface, jagged cracks lace thick fingers across the trunk of a beech, and brilliant red berries set themselves against a background of fall leaves. Every season provides a new display of Nature's art, missed by casual passersby but celebrated here by those with an eye for such things.

Once upon a time, this was a far different place. Studded with giant Douglas fir and other climax species of evergreen and deciduous trees, forest habitat dominated the area. Then, before the turn of the century, Pope & Talbot, the oldest lumber company in the Pacific Northwest, logged it. Land that was not saved by timber baron Cyrus Walker

ABOVE: A red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) shows its landing technique in this composite photograph.

MARIDEE BONADEA

became the Washington Park Arboretum or the adjoining neighborhoods of Madison Park, Washington Park and Broadmoor, which were served by a trolley car system to downtown. The wetlands changed still more with the opening of the ship canal in 1917, which lowered Lake Washington's water level by nearly 11 feet. The newly exposed virgin lake bottom was soon consumed by water lilies, reeds, cattails, and willows. These in turn provided habitat for birds, insects, and the occasional mammal.

Today, the peace and artistry of the place is profound—quiet, yet teeming with life, an environment that is home to many and succor to those of us just passing through. It inspires artists and bids the curious to explore.

All great cities have a soul, and Seattle's arises from a deep entanglement with the wild. We are surrounded by slumbering volcanoes, pierced through by massive, unexpected runs of salmon. Eagles choose our trees to raise their young. Coyotes still howl at night. And on the water's edge, pinned between a freeway and quiet, orderly neighborhoods, there exists a place with more wildness, beauty and surprise than could be imagined. . . .

Michael Anderson, from the *Introduction.*

The Wetland Alliance is a group of individuals dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the Washington Park Arboretum wetlands. For more information, see www.arboretumwetlands.com.

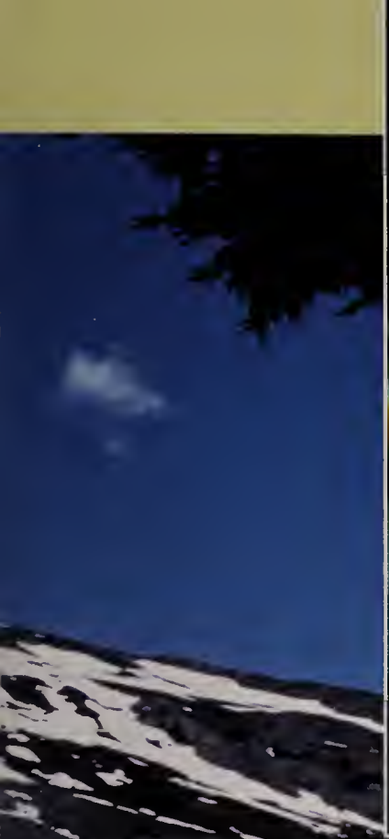
ABOVE: A boardwalk allows visitors access to the heart of the Arboretum wetlands.

A NEW PLANT COLLECTION FOR THE PACIFIC CONNECTIONS GARDEN

Immerse Yourself in a Chilean Forest

By Sarah Reichard

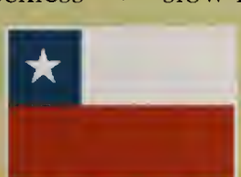
ABOVE: The new Chilean display in the Pacific Connections Garden will be based upon plant communities found in *Nothofagus* forests located near Lake Villarrica in south-central Chile.



RICHIE STEFFEN

RICHIE STEFFEN

Too often drivers whiz down Seattle's Lake Washington Boulevard at reckless speeds, heedless that they are traveling through Washington Park Arboretum—one of the finest plant collections in the United States and, perhaps, the world. But plans are afoot to slow motorists down with the botanical splendors of the new Pacific Connections Garden currently in development toward the south end of the Arboretum.



ABOVE: Pictured are the flowers and fragrant leaves of *Drimys winteri*, a large evergreen shrub that has symbolic significance and multiple practical uses for the Mapuche, a native people of Chile. **BELOW:** The low-gloss, leathery leaves of *Gevuina avellana* set off clusters of creamy-white flowers that bloom between June and November. This tall evergreen shrub produces seeds that are a popular Chilean food.

This ambitious project ultimately will display plants from five regions of the world: native flora from our own Cascadia; the southern beech forests found in New Zealand; the snowgum forests of Australia; the trees, shrubsand groundcovers indigenous to Mt. Omei in China; and, in the place of honor along the Boulevard, a forest of south-central Chile. In a few years motorists may brake a bit at the eye-popping sight of the orange-red flowers of the Chilean fire tree, *Embothrium coccineum* (Proteaceae). Or they may detect the sweet scent of *Eucryphia cordifolia* (Cunoniaceae) in the warm summer air, attracting bees from the Arboretum's hives. (In Chile a delicious honey —*miel de ulmo*— is made from the nectar of this species.)

The new collection is being designed to make visitors feel as though they are immersed in the forests of south-central Chile. This region, like most of the others in the project, was chosen because its climate—mild, wet winters followed by relatively dry summers—has an overall similarity to our own. In addition, many plant species from that area of Chile are beautiful and hardy in the maritime Pacific Northwest, yet rarely found in cultivation here. By familiarizing regional gardeners with these exceptional species, we hope to stimulate their interest in trying new plants that are adapted to our dry summers and do not require additional irrigation. Examples of hardy drought-tolerant species from this area include *Mitraria coccinea* (Gesneriaceae—yes! the African violet family), with its hummingbird-attracting red flowers. In its native range *Mitraria coccinea* is often an epiphyte (growing on other plants for support), but it does well here as an in-ground shrub. The garden at the former Heronswood Nursery on Bainbridge Island, for instance, boasts one that has survived for many years. Another example of a wonderful Chilean plant underused in the Pacific Northwest is *Crinodendron hookerianum* (Elaeocarpaceae), a small tree or large shrub with pendulous, lantern-like red flowers. One of my favorites is the evergreen shrub *Desfontainia spinosa* (Desfontainiaceae). Its leaves are spiny-tipped, much like the invasive European or evergreen holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), but its orange and yellow tubular flowers look as if a prankster has strung Halloween candy in its branches.

The Chilean display will start on the south side of the Arboretum's landmark Stone Cottage and cross Arboretum Drive to continue north on Lake Washington Boulevard as far as the new Chinese Garden. Two different forest types will represent the Chilean collection. If visitors glance eastward up a steep hill, they will catch sight of a small grove of monkey puzzle trees, *Araucaria araucana* (Araucariaceae). While this bizarre, spiky-leaved tree seems to evoke strong feelings of either love or hate among Northwest gardeners, visitors who have seen the rare species in its remaining wild populations in Chile may recall viewing with awe this architectural tree backed by snow-capped volcanoes. The scene seems so primitive that one might expect to see a dinosaur emerge! The Arboretum setting may prove to be a little less dramatic than the trees' natural environment, but visitors should be able to gain a sense of the original experience. This is a rare forest type, found only between 37°20'S and 40°20'S in the Andes Mountains and on the Chilean coast. Other plants we plan to include from this forest are

Gaultheria (Pernettya) pumila, Berberis empetrifolia, B. buxifolia, B. darwinii, Maytenus disticha, Pseudopanax laetevirens, Desfontainia spinosa, Embothrium coccineum, and *Lomatia hirsuta.*

The second forest will be a type much more commonly found in Chile—the southern beech or *Nothofagus* forest. These forests, which exhibit slight differences in associated species found across their range, cover much of the country, especially areas south of the capital city of Santiago. (See map of Chile left). We have chosen to represent a part of the forest along Lake Villarrica at 39°12'S, 72°10'W because of its exceptionally interesting diversity of plant life. A collection of plants from this forest will extend along part of the boulevard. The dominant trees will be *Nothofagus obliqua, N. dombeyi* and *Eucryphia cordifolia.* Other plants include *Drimys winteri, Persea lingue, Laurelia sempervirens, Gevuina avellana, Caldcluvia paniculata, Fuchsia magellanica, Hydrangea integerrima, Mitraria coccinea, Cissus striata* and *Polypodium feuillei.* A key feature of these forests is an understory of bamboos in the genus *Chusquea.* Because some bamboos are invasive, we have discussed whether we should include any bamboos in the display. Current plans are to use one species, *C. quila,* which may be less invasive, and to evaluate it continuously after planting.

RICHIE STEFFEN

Eucryphia cordifolia bears profuse, sweet-smelling blooms. Specimens of this tall evergreen tree will be planted in the Chilean display's replication of a *Nothofagus* forest.

As a part of its interpretive program, the Chilean garden will present information on the native people of south-central Chile—the Mapuche—and their traditional uses of indigenous plants. Although *Araucaria araucana* (known to the Mapuche as *pehuén*) is now rare, its large seeds once were a very important food source—equivalent to bread. Dried seeds provided carbohydrates through the winter months. Its strong wood was an important timber source, and its resins were used to treat wounds. The fruits of *Berberis* (barberry) species also are eaten, and *B. darwinii* fruits are made into a fermented juice. *Drimys winteri,* a large shrub with fragrant leaves and bundles of small Magnolia-like flowers, is something of a pharmacy to the healers—or *machi*—of the Mapuche, who were usually female. Not only do the chemicals in the plants have tonic and stimulant effects, but the plant itself is the Mapuche symbol for benevolence, peace and justice. And if that was not enough, its light, sturdy wood is used for construction! By including stories about the significance of these plants to the region's native people, we hope to stimulate thought about the importance of plants

The Arboretum Foundation celebrates the publication of

THE WILD WITHIN:
Wetlands of the Washington Park Arboretum

- **A stunning collection of more than 120 photographs documenting the diverse wildlife in the Arboretum wetlands.**
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PHOTO BY MICHELE A. BURTON

RICHIE STEFFEN

to people in general—in keeping with the University of Washington Botanic Gardens' motto: Plants for Life!

Another key theme of the interpretation will concern plant conservation. Most scientists believe we are in a period of biological extinctions perhaps more severe than any in Earth's history. The World Conservation Union (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature) compiles a regularly updated list—called the Red List—as a tool for tracking the most imperiled species on Earth. If a species appears on the list, it means that scientists are concerned about its ability to survive on its own in the long term, given current environmental threats. The Red List for 2007 evaluated 12,043 of the Earth's estimated 297,326 plant species and determined that 70 per cent of these species are threatened. About 33 per cent of all conifers examined, including Chilean species such as *Araucaria araucana, Austrocedrus chilensis* and *Fitzroya cupressoides,* are in peril. We plan to provide interpretive displays about these threatened species; we also plan to assist in conserving their genetic variation.

How will we accomplish such a task? As I write this article the University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) is planning an expedition to Chile to acquire plants. While some of these plants are commercially available, many are not. The UWBG, in keeping with current thoughts about collection development in gardens with a strong conservation focus, prefers to collect wild plants and seeds of known provenance. By knowing the exact original location of the collected materials, we can help further efforts to conserve species through *ex situ,* or off-site, conservation. If certain species become imperiled in the future, for example, collections such as the one we are assembling will provide appropriate, genetically diverse material for propagating plants that can be reintroduced into locations in the wild.

While the Chilean collection is being planned, small display gardens representing each region included in the Pacific Connections Garden are being established to give visitors a taste of the completed project. The representative gardens will surround an innovative interpretive shelter.* The display gardens and the shelter will be ready to enjoy by next spring. Most of the plants previously discussed in this article, as well as many others, will be featured in the small Chilean display garden.

The Washington Park Arboretum master plan, adopted in 2001, will chart the direction of the Arboretum for decades in the future. The Pacific Connections Garden, along with completed changes in the Pinetum and Duck Bay, is a sign of the great things to come. And maybe, just maybe, those motorists will stop and smell the *Eucryphia*! ~

Sarah Reichard is a University of Washington associate professor affiliated with the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. She is head of conservation for the UWBG, acting curator of the Hyde Herbarium and has been an active member of the UWBG Curation Committee.

ABOVE LEFT: The Chilean fire tree (*Embothrium coccineum*) will add dramatic scarlet blooms to the Arboretum's spring landscape.

BELOW LEFT: *Desfontainia spinosa* is an evergreen shrub that grows to six feet tall and is native to lightly shaded forests in the Andes.

***An article on the new interpretive shelter will appear in the Spring 2008 issue of the Bulletin.**

A Profile of Roberta Wightman

By Walt Bubelis

Are you a history buff? Interested in the Arboretum? Or in landscape design? Someone who ties these threads together is Roberta Wightman, a landscape architect who worked at the Arboretum from 1945-46 and just celebrated her 95th birthday at The Hearthstone, a retirement home near Seattle's Green Lake Park. Longevity always helps, but Roberta has been in the right place at the right time in so many instances that she has had an exceptionally interesting life and career. Over her long tenure in the Pacific Northwest, she has put her stamp on numerous regional gardens, projects and people.

I have known Roberta since 1971, when she first came my way to help teach classes in landscape design and construction at Edmonds Community College. Having taught in the ECC Horticulture program for 36 years, one of my most indelible memories of working there is of a petite and smartly dressed Roberta who—exasperated at the progress being made on a garden construction project—hopped into a trench, took the shovel away from a tall, able-bodied young man, and proceeded to show him and the other students the proper way to dig. She didn't know it then, but she was an early proponent of ergonomics.

Roberta planned to teach at the college only until we found another full-time instructor, but instead she stayed on for three years, instilling excellent work habits in the students fortunate enough to attend her classes. Some of them have just retired from long careers in the horticulture field—among them Mike Fleming, who was grounds manager at the Carl English Jr. Botanical Gardens at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks (also known as the Ballard Locks) for over 20 years, and Mark Stewart, who served as Everett Community College's grounds manager for an equal period of time.

Roberta's mother instilled in her a life-long passion for learning and teaching. Mrs. Wightman was an early proponent of the Montessori teaching method. After researching its fundamental tenets through correspondence with Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, she established the first Montessori school west of the Mississippi, in Omaha, Nebraska. Roberta was a student there until the fifth grade, when her father died. The family moved to Evanston, Illinois, where she continued her education at the progressive Francis W. Parker School and then went on to study the humanities at Oberlin and Middlebury Colleges.

Roberta continued her studies at the University of Illinois and graduated in 1938 with a master's degree in landscape architecture. Her mother took her to Europe as a graduation gift—but never one to do things halfway, Mrs. Wightman shipped over their Ford four-door convertible so they could tour properly! Accompanied by an aunt and a family friend, they traveled for four months through France, Italy, England and Germany where, on one memorable day, they caught sight of Hitler twice while in Berlin. Roberta feels that visiting the great gardens and villas of Europe on that trip strongly reinforced the lessons of her just-completed studies.

Upon her return from Europe, Roberta's first job was working on a large, 4000-acre reclamation and development project near Springfield, Illinois. She was responsible for subdividing properties into home sites, creating recreation areas such as swimming pools, and establishing a wildlife sanctuary. Since nearby nurseries only carried small plants and starts, she established her own nursery to grow speci-

STEVE WHITNER

WALT BUBELIS

BACKGROUND: Roberta Wightman's design for the campus of Northwest Hospital in North Seattle emphasizes naturalistic plantings and seasonal color. **INSET:** Roberta painted this landscape in the 1930s, while studying under Emil Bisttram in Taos, New Mexico.

mens to a mature size before planting them on the development's new lots. She also raised corn in order to feed migratory birds that foraged in the wildlife sanctuary.

During this period Roberta took a vacation in Florida, where she called on David Fairchild, founder of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. He was a renowned plant collector who used his personal yacht to search the South Pacific for palms and other tropical plants that might successfully grow in Florida. Fairchild gave her an extended tour of his botanic garden, partly because Roberta was a landscape architect, and partly because she knew his wife, who was a daughter of Alexander Graham Bell.

Roberta worked on the Illinois project for five years. Then her mother, who had become a pharmacist, took a position with the Washington State Department of Health. Roberta decided to move with her to the Pacific Northwest, even though there was no job awaiting her here. Since it was wartime, they used gas, coffee, cigarette and butter coupons—some of them donated by friends—to get enough gas for the cross-country trip.

Roberta spent her initial time in Puget Sound learning its flora and fauna. Eventually, she went to the Arboretum office to introduce herself to the director, John Hanley. Hanley had done postgraduate work at the University of Illinois during the same period Roberta was a student there, and they had friends in common. Upon returning from a walk in the Arboretum after her visit to Hanley, Roberta found a note on her windshield. It was from the director, asking her to come back for a job.

The position was part-time and paid $85 per month. One of her tasks was to correct the grammar and spelling in issues of the Arboretum Bulletin. At that time, the Bulletin was a two-sheet publication that came out irregularly, with articles written by both amateurs and specialists. Another of Roberta's jobs was to write a bloom-date book for visitors touring the Arboretum.

Roberta also became involved in the design and planting of the lilac section of the still-developing Arboretum grounds. One of her favorite lilacs remains *Syringa* x *persica*, a

plant that is commonly called Chinese lilac. An older name, Rouen lilac, is more apt as it was first raised as a hybrid in Rouen, France in 1777 using *S. protolaciniata* and *S. vulgaris.* The Arboretum purchased its lilacs from mail-order nurseries such as W.B. Clarke of San Jose and Bobbink & Atkins of Rutherford, New Jersey. The prices in the catalogs now seem astonishingly low: Two to three foot specimens cost .75 cents to $1.25, while seven to eight foot tall specimens cost between $5.00 and $6.50, depending upon the cultivar.

During this period, lilacs were often grafted instead of started from cuttings. A statement in a letter from lilac grower W.B. Clarke to John Hanley on this subject is telling. "Any nurseryman who will graft Lilacs on Lilac [sic] should be shot at sunrise. Plants budded on privet, if planted with the union about four inches underground, are far better than those on their own roots." Some old specimens of lilacs still bear two-color sets as the rootstock asserts itself, a phenomenon also sometimes seen on old specimens of rhododendrons.

Roberta remembers John Hanley as very gracious and personable. He had a special interest in rhododendrons and, as soon as WW II ended, traveled to England to do research at some of the great botanic gardens and estates, including Lionel de Rothschild's. Hanley resigned from his position after returning, and Brian Mulligan became the new director. Hanley remained in the area, writing garden columns for The Seattle Post-Intelligencer until he suffered a fatal heart attack in 1959. He was known for the easy-yet-informative manner of his columns, a book ("Year 'Round Gardening in the West"), editing the publication "Northwest Gardens and Homes," giving talks to garden clubs and serving as a floral judge in numerous competitions.

Brian Mulligan asked Roberta to stay on at the Arboretum, but as they differed on pruning techniques she declined. Instead, she began working in the office of the Seattle landscape architect Edwin Grohs. Roberta quickly became a valued employee and was asked to interview clients on Eddie's behalf from a point early in their association. In 1948 Roberta embarked on her own practice, establishing an impressive track record as she executed both public and private designs all over the Pacific Northwest. I believe she holds the record as the longest practicing landscape architect in the state, as she continues to work on projects today.

Roberta was one of 10 Seattle landscape architects to establish the Washington Society of Landscape Architects (WSLA) in 1946, and she served as its secretary-treasurer during its formative years. The WSLA, which promoted use of local talent and collaborated on projects with the Washington State Nursery Association, existed until 1970, when its members were invited to join the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA).

Over the years Roberta has had many distinguished private clients, some of whom she has remained in contact with for decades. But she is especially proud of her involvement in the public sphere. Roberta designed a set of plant collections for the grounds at Everett Community College, for instance, that is based upon family relationships. Two of her core collections, a Pinetum and a display of specimens of the witch hazel family, Hamamelidaceae, still flourish on the campus.

Most telling is how Roberta placed her stamp upon Seattle's Northwest Hospital, where she was the design consultant for over 30 years. She put into practice ideas that made life easier for the patients staying there, like having something of interest, whether of bloom or texture, planted outside every window, and like curving the edges of sidewalks inward and upward to prevent wheelchairs from running off the sidewalk's edge. Roberta was a proponent of analyzing the needs of one's disabled clients and of arriving at solutions to help them. This approach is a trademark of horticulture therapy, which is now a much more developed field than it was when she

first started her practice. When new areas of the hospital campus were developed, Roberta was able to save many of the older trees and shrubs that otherwise would have been bulldozed and destroyed. She made a special point of marking attractive natives for salvage; *Amelanchier alnifolia*, our native Juneberry, was a favorite that she always tried to preserve.

In my mind, Roberta is notable for her deep knowledge of a wide range of plants, and for the ways she used them in naturalistic designs. She is an advocate of the Olmsted school, with its emphasis on wide visual sweeps and a naturalistic look, and she has the ability to scale such features to average-sized gardens. She was one of the founders of the non-profit organization Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks and supervised drainage work on one of the Olmsted gardens in North Seattle. Her consequent correspondence with the Olmsted firm's headquarters in Brookline, Massachutsetts is included in the archives of the Library of Congress. Roberta remembers, as a highlight, her meeting in Boston with one of Frederick Law Olmsted's sons, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

Roberta displays a practical bent in her designs, noting where the sprinkler systems and drain lines are to be located, and providing access points for mowing and pruning for future maintenance. She advocates that gardens be interesting at all times of the year. She strongly believes in proper spacing of her plants, wanting them to exist as separate entities even as they grow to their mature sizes. I remember her deploring how closely some specimens of *Camellia sasanqua* had been planted at an estate where I had the good fortune to work. They had been planted 15 feet apart almost twenty years before, and now I was busy pruning a dense, intertwined hedge—proving Roberta's point that you have to space plants with their future growth in mind!

Roberta adjusts each design to fit the features of the site. As was mentioned above, one of her driving concerns is conserving plants already there. She also analyzes the topography to assess how and where surface and subsurface water will drain. Even though her training was classical and rigorous (she studied French, Greek and Latin), she retains a common touch. In each job she has overseen, she got to know the workmen and craftsmen. She wanted and demanded their very best, whether it was digging around existing trees or laying brickwork for a retaining wall. In the end, her garden designs always look natural, as though they have been there for some time.

One last note. See the picture behind Roberta on page 27? That is one of her own, painted when she took private art lessons from the well-known artist Emil Bisttram in Taos, New Mexico from 1936 through 1937. Roberta learned techniques in these lessons that she would use later in her landscape designs. For instance, Bisttram used a technique that initially seems unnecessarily limiting: he made his students paint using only three colors, because he wanted the class to pay attention to the composition, the balance and the textural qualities of their work, and he felt that a multitude of colors would distract the students from achieving these results. This early training inspired the sweeping and naturalistic qualities in Roberta's garden designs.

For two summers Roberta lived among some of the formative artists and *literati* of the day. If the painting has a Georgia O'Keefe feeling to it, that is because her landlady was a good friend of Georgia's. Taos was the first literary colony in the West, with gatherings hosted by Mabel Dodge Luhan and D.H. Lawrence's widow, Frieda. Roberta enjoyed living in the culturally lively atmosphere of Taos and would not have been unhappy to retire there. Instead, she still lives here in Seattle, in good health and spirits. ~

Walt Bubelis is an instructor in the Horticulture program at Edmonds Community College and frequently writes for the Bulletin.

The Plants and Gardens of Scotland

By Brian R. Thompson

In June 1977, I was traveling on a train between Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh in Scotland. As we passed through low woodlands, I was delighted every few moments by explosions of bright mauve blooms. I was told—mistakenly, as it turns out—that these were the flowers of the native rhododendron.

This past May, almost 30 years later, I was similarly dazzled by the rhododendrons of Inverewe Gardens on Scotland's west coast. Here the colors were much more diverse—creamy white to deep purple—but the growth, whether small shrub or large tree, was equal to the exuberant plants I had seen on that earlier train ride. By now I knew, however, that what I had seen in 1977 was the invasive, non-native *Rhododendron ponticum* that covers many miles of the Scottish Highlands.

Scotland lures me with its plants, both the good and the bad—be it the purple hills of heather in late August, or the naturalized daffodils that seem to fill every lawn during April. Visitors seek out not only the magnifi-

cent gardens of Inverewe and Crathes Castle, but also famed alpine plant nurseries like Jack Drake's at Inshriach. Others enjoy the few remaining old growth Scots pines of the remnant Caledonian Forest.

I have made many trips to Scotland since that first one, and each has in some way focused on plants, whether they are found in the wild, in gardens or in nurseries. Numerous books have enriched my understanding and appreciation of these plants. Here are a few of my favorites:

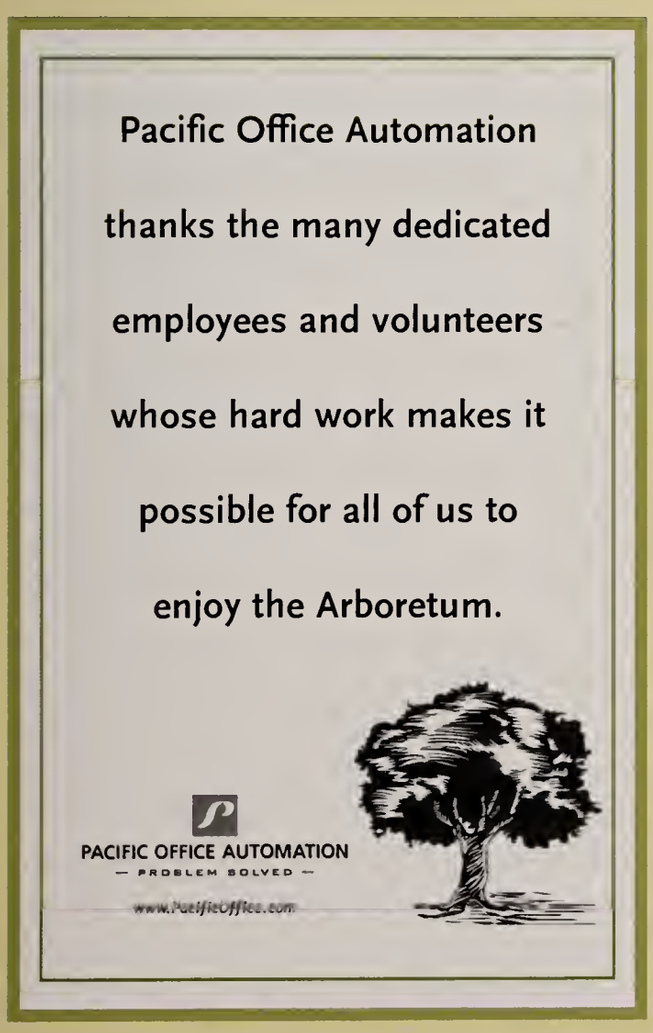
Plants and People

If I could have only one book on the plants of Scotland, it would be "Flora Celtica: Plants and People in Scotland." While the main title suggests a comprehensive, taxonomic review of natives, authors William Milliken and Sam Bridgewater instead use ethnobotany as their framework to categorize plants according to their impact on humans.

And there is quite a range to this impact. Besides treating the expected, such as foods, traditional crafts and medicines, this book looks both to the past—recounting much folklore and ceremony—and to the future, exploring the role of plants as we grapple with climate change, restoration and sustainability of resources.

The genius is in the presentation. Turn to any page, and you will find fascinating biographies, historical photos and drawings, and even poetry and lyrics of traditional songs, all of which are woven around a very readable text. But this book is not just about history—the photographs (many by author Milliken) clearly illustrate the landscape and people of today.

"We no longer fumigate our houses with juniper leaves . . . or tie rowan twigs onto our cows' tails to ward off the fairies. But we do still . . . decorate our homes with holly at Christmas and plant marram grass to hold back the sea. And, while some practices are being



lost, others are being acquired. . . " This quote from the introduction captures the spirit of this large, complex and thoroughly engaging book.

"Flora Celtica" is a bit large to take on your travels, but for something that does fit in your suitcase consider "Scottish Wild Plants: Their History, Ecology and Conservation." Authors Philip Lusby and Jenny Wright include some 40 plant profiles into which they skillfully weave a description of each plant, its habitat and ecological niche, as well as associated plants and animals, natural history, and even something of the history of Scotland's botany.

This is a good read straight through, yet it is also useful as a reference work. But you will want a pocket field guide, too: several good ones can be found in any bookstore in Scotland. "Scottish Wild Plants" is more for setting the mood. For example, you will learn that *Primula scotica* is one of the few endemic plants in Scotland, and its survival is linked to rabbits—animals introduced to Britain in Roman times. But the relationship isn't what you might guess. The Scottish primrose actually thrives best where rabbits are plentiful, as they eat the taller plants that shade this tiny, post-glacial relic.

Gardens

On my second trip to Scotland, many years after the first, I focused on visiting gardens. How I wish "The Gardens of The National Trust for Scotland," by Francesca Greenoak, had been available then, as nearly every garden on my short list was part of the Trust. I would have known before my visit that Inverewe is indeed a rhododendron haven with over 2,000 different types and that its founder was known as "Bigleaf" Osgood for his love of large-leaf rhodies.

Greenoak is skilled at teasing out such lively facts for her garden descriptions. Of equal importance are Brian Chapple's photographs. Functioning as much more than coffee table book fillers, his images tell a story. One example is a series of photographs showing the rejuvenation of the massive and ancient yew hedges at Crathes Castle. At first I gasped at seeing stately walls of green cut back to bare stumps, but subsequent images showed the gradual regrowth and restoration of these 300-year-old masterpieces. The gardening staff knows their craft!

A good complement is the older "Private Gardens of Scotland," published in 1988. James Truscott states in the introduction his hope to transport the reader to ". . . a temporary withdrawal from humdrum everyday life into a cloistered world of scents and colours, where half-forgotten feelings of wonderment and awe can be rediscovered." It is an ambitious goal, but he succeeds by having one of the best pens for garden description that I've ever encountered.

The photographs by Hugh Palmer complement the writing, but they are not the stars. This book is meant to be read—even if you never visit the gardens. Truscott's use of telling details, and his narrative style of "touring" each garden, will teach you a great deal, especially about design, as is fitting for an author who is also a landscape architect. His text is full of fun facts, too: Did you know that Mary Queen of Scots, the Crown Prince of Japan and Margaret Thatcher all have planted trees at Scone Palace near Perth?

To complete your tour of gardens in Scotland, you must include visiting the four sites of the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. Marty Wingate's engaging introduction to them on page eight will leave you wanting to know more, and an excellent source is "4 Gardens in One," by Deni Bown. Brown writes with passion and a taste for lively history, and she has taken the photographs as well. It was in her entry on the Younger Botanic Garden at Benmore that I first learned the full truth of *Rhododendron ponticum*. "Even today one will encounter areas in the far west of the garden which are yet to be cleared; these are still ponticum territory and virtually impenetrable."

I am already packing for my next trip to

Scotland. Bagpipes, kilts and wee drams are all fine in their place, but it's the gardens and the native flora that will keep bringing me back. You should come and join me, but first check out these books—or others on the list—from the Miller Library. Then pour a fine, single malt, sit ye down by the fire, and begin reading!

Brian R. Thompson is curator of horticultural literature at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, University of Washington Botanic Gardens.

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Also Recommended

Curtis, Eric W. "The Story of Glasgow's Botanic Gardens." Glendaruel, Scotland: Argyll Publishing, 2006. ISBN: 1902831942, £15.99.

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Bird Haven *continued from page 15*

Who Lives Where

Birds can be divided into cavity nesters (birds that use hollow sites as nest sites) and those that nest elsewhere. Cavity nesters, such as woodpeckers, make their own nests if allowed access to snags. Topped snags also provide them with opportunities to feed on insects. Other cavity nesters, such as wrens, chickadees, swallows and nuthatches, also sometimes will make their nests in holes in tree trunks, but if the natural sites are not available, they will inhabit bird houses. Woodpeckers occasionally will nest in boxes, too; placing sawdust in a box allows the woodpecker to arrange the sawdust to construct a nest.

Other species of birds are strictly do-it-yourselfers when it comes to constructing nests. It doesn't hurt to provide them with nesting material, such as clothes dryer lint, string and mud puddles. Hosting a bushtit nest in a conifer is fun: The bag-shaped nest takes on a life of its own when the juveniles are getting ready to fledge. (But don't let the crows know.)

These suggestions just scratch the surface, but if you follow them, you will attract more, and more desirable, types of birds into your garden.

RESOURCES

Find additional information, especially what to plant, in the following sources:

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program. http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/backyard/

Native Plant Salvage Project. Washington State University Extension—Thurston County, 1999.http://cru84.cahe.wsu.edu/cgi-bin/pubs/MISC0273.html

Marty Wingate. "Habitats Birds Will Be Wild About" Seattle Times, August 10, 2007. http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/nwgardens/326852_birdgarden11.html

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Herb Curl, Jr. is a retired oceanographer and member of Seattle Audubon Society. He wrote "Hummingbirds: Garden Gems," in the Fall 2007 issue of the Bulletin.

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